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MEMORANDUM

TO: **Superintendents**
FROM: **Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE)**
SUBJECT: **Revisions to the Elementary Endorsement**
DATE: **12/2/13**

The Vermont AOE and the VSBPE are proud to announce the adoption of a revised Elementary Education endorsement effective 11/21/13. Over the last year, the VSBPE and the AOE consulted and worked with representatives of teacher preparation programs; content area experts; early childhood, primary, intermediate, and middle level teachers; special educators; art and music teachers; school counselors; library and media specialists; principals; superintendents; and members of the public to consider how the endorsement should be updated and revised to support the training and continued professional learning of elementary educators.

The following information offers an overview of the changes and the AOE's timeline for implementation.

What is the purpose of the elementary endorsement?

Endorsements represent the unique content knowledge and skills required for teaching specific subject matter. The ultimate purpose for endorsements is to provide students with highly effective educators who can deliver the education necessary for students to achieve or exceed state standards, as well as to influence the hiring process and staffing for schools, and to shape educator preparation programs. Specifically, educators with an Elementary Education endorsement are authorized to teach grades K-6.

Why revise the elementary endorsement?

Vermont adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in August 2010. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education so that they graduate from high school able to succeed in college and career. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were then approved by the Vermont State Board of Education in June 2013. The introduction of new student standards necessitated the revision of the endorsement in order to ensure alignment with the expectations for teacher knowledge and skills.

Are we transitioning from a generalist endorsement to one where elementary teachers specialize in a content area (e.g. elementary math)? or Why aren't we transitioning to an endorsement where elementary teachers specialize in a content area (e.g. elementary math)?

The elementary endorsement remains a generalist endorsement requiring educators to possess both content strength and the ability to integrate multiple subjects in interdisciplinary units of instruction. This generalist model supports both the current structure of many Vermont elementary schools and the successful implementation of the CCSS and the NGSS. The endorsement defines specific knowledge and skills for multiple subject areas in order to support

the development of the educator's content strength. The standards, however, both explicitly and implicitly reference other content areas and are designed to support an educator in teaching a content-rich curriculum across subject areas.

Why isn't this a K-5 license? Why not break the license down into lower vs. upper elementary standards? Why is 6th grade included here?

The elementary endorsement reflects K-6 student standards and is structured to support the current structures and practices of schools across Vermont. This includes K-8, K-6, and K-5 schools. It is also meant to support school leaders in adjusting assignments to meet their staffing needs. While an endorsement that is focused on a particular grade band would narrow requirements, the VSBPE determined that such a restructuring would prove burdensome on schools and educators seeking licensure.

Why doesn't the endorsement include standards related to assessment, technology, accommodating students with special needs, diversity working with families, etc.?

In order to qualify for any endorsement, a candidate must first demonstrate that he/she meets the standards of practice identified in Vermont's [Core Teaching Standards](#) required of all educators. These standards form a blueprint for the performances and essential knowledge that every educator should strive toward to ensure that all preK-12 students are college and career ready. Specifically, the standards call for:

- Personalized learning for diverse learners
- A stronger focus on application of knowledge and skills
- Improved assessment literacy
- A collaborative professional culture
- New leadership roles for teachers and administrators

Vermont endorsements work in conjunction with the Core Teaching Standards by further defining the knowledge and performance requirements that are unique for an educator in a particular area.

How were the social studies standards drafted?

The social studies standards are aligned with the 2013 [College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework](#) for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards produced by the National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) and with the newly adopted [Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subject test](#). Additionally, the standards remain aligned with VT's Framework. Committee members also reviewed the 2012 *New York Common Core K-8 Social Studies Framework* during the drafting process.

How will the endorsement revisions impact teacher preparation programs?

The AOE and the VSBPE worked closely with teacher preparation programs from across the state throughout the revision process. The endorsement revisions will require these programs to adjust their curriculum, including their liberal arts and sciences requirements, to align with the



updated standards. Moreover, programs should consider current research that supports the practice of blending content and pedagogy, particularly in math¹.

Programs will also have to adjust their practicum requirements to ensure that candidates meet the new grade level split. Candidates now must have a minimum of a practicum, or the equivalent, in elementary education at both the primary (**K-2**) and upper elementary (**3-6**) instructional levels.

Elementary programs should make every effort to ensure candidates entering programs in the fall of 2014 will meet the new standards prior to being recommended for licensure. **Candidates entering programs in the fall of 2015 are required to meet the standards of the revised endorsement to qualify for licensure.** The AOE is available to support colleges and alternate routes in reviewing the new requirements in order to update their approved elementary education programs.

What about educators who currently hold the elementary endorsement?

Currently licensed elementary teachers will begin using the new endorsement requirements at the time of their license renewal (or sooner, if they choose) in the development of their Individual Professional Learning Plan (IPLP). School leaders can further support their educators in meeting the new endorsement requirements by requiring educators to meet the updated standards as part of their school action plan.

¹ Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences (2012). [The Mathematical Education of Teachers II](#). Providence RI and Washington DC: American Mathematical Society and Mathematical Association of America.

